



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Testimony in Support of SB 574
Senate Regulatory Reform Committee
September 22, 2011**

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and its more than 370,000 Michigan members and constituents, I thank you for hearing SB 574 today.

HSUS undercover investigations of the puppy mills providing animals for such establishments as Petland and "Pets of Bel Air" have thrown into light the harsh realities caused by mass breeding of puppies. Animals in puppy mills are subjected to horrific treatment, and then consumers are often duped into purchasing pets with serious diseases or genetic defects. 18 state legislatures, including Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Vermont, have enacted "pet lemon laws" to compensate consumers who are victims of this deception, and to hold pet stores and breeders accountable for the conditions of the animals they sell.

Many consumers never visit the homes or facilities where their pet was raised, may never have better contact information for a pet seller than a cell phone, and may not have ever purchased an animal before. They may therefore be unaware of the origins of the animals they see in a pet store, on breeders' websites, or in newspaper ads. SB 574 helps to protect Michigan pet buyers by including specific time frames for reporting illnesses in the pets, allowing time for a veterinarian to identify congenital defects, and setting maximum amounts a buyer can recover for the treatment of the pets. These provisions will allow a family recourse when they have to spend potentially thousands of dollars to minister to a beloved pet who is not as healthy as promised by the seller.

In addition to helping to compensate Michigan consumers for heartrending losses, SB 574 may also provide a financial incentive for pet sellers in our state to improve conditions and veterinary attention for the animals in their care, and to exercise more diligence in choosing who will provide them with the animals they sell.

We urge you to vote yes on SB 574, to help safeguard Michigan consumers and the welfare of animals. Thank you.

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